

Message Text

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SUBJECT: BOURGUIBA IN UPI INTERVIEW COMMENTS ON
WATERGATE, SECRETARY KISSINGER'S PEACE EFFORTS
AND QADHAFI AND STUDENTS

1. SUMMARY: IN 30-MINUTE INTERVIEW WITH LOCAL UPI
CORRESPONDENT, MAY 13, PRESIDENT BOURGUIBA RESPONDED TO
QUESTION ON WATER GATE BY EXPRESSING HOPE IT WOULD NOT LEAD
TO PRESIDENT NIXON'S RESIGNATION OR REMOVAL. HE CALLED
IT AN AMERICAN INTERNAL AFFAIR WHICH DOES NOT CONCERN HIM.
U.S. IS A FRIENDLY COUNTRY. BOURGUIBA PRAISED SECSTATE
KISSINGER'S EFFORTS TO REACH A PEACE SETTLEMENT IN MIDDLE
EAST. HE SAID TIME NOT RIPE FOR TUNISIAN-LIBYAN UNION AND
CRITICIZED QADHAFI FOR LIBYAN RADIO ATTACKS ENDEAVORING TO
PORTRAY LATEST TUNISIAN UNIVERSITY STUDENT STRIKE AS
MANIFESTATION OF PAN-ARAB NASSERISM. SAID THESE ATTACKS,
WHICH HE CHARACTERIZED AS CHILDISH, WERE RAISED WITH
LIBYAN REP HERE BUT LATTER DENIED HE WAS AWARE OF THEM.
BOURGUIBA ALSO COMMENTED ON FRENCH ELECTIONS, PREDICTING
VICTORY OF GISCARD D'ESTAING, AND ON "REGRETTABLE"
RESIGNATION OF WILLY BRANDT. END SUMMARY.

2. IN WIDE-RANGING INTERVIEW ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS,
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BOURGUIBA, AFTER DISCUSSING RESIGNATION OF WILLY BRANDT,

WAS ASKED ABOUT RUMORS OF NIXON RESIGNATION. BOURGUIBA REPLIED THAT HE WAS AWARE OF THEM BUT NOTED THEY ALSO HAD BEEN DENIED. HE SAID HE DID NOT WANT TO ADDRESS THIS QUESTION. U.S. IS A FRIENDLY COUNTRY. HE CALLED WATERGATE AFFAIR A "REGRETTABLE THING." HE ADDED THAT SECRETARY KISSINGER WAS DOING GOOD WORK IN THE MIDDLE EAST. HIS ATTITUDE HAS CHANGED SINCE THE RAMADAN WAR. EVEN THOUGH HE DOES NOT EXERT GREAT PRESSURE ON ISRAEL, THERE ARE EVENTS WHICH MILITATE IN FAVOR OF THE AMERICAN POLICY IN THE MIDDLE EAST. FOR THIS REASON BOURGUIBA HOPES WATERGATE WILL NOT FORCE NIXON TO RESIGN OR LEAD TO HIS REMOVAL. HE SAID HE DID NOT WANT TO TALK MORE ABOUT THIS SINCE IT IS AMERICAN INTERNAL AFFAIR WHICH DOES NOT CONCERN HIM. HE SEES THAT US POLICY IS GOOD, IT HAS ACHIEVED DETENTE WHICH HAS PERMITTED A WITHDRAWAL FROM VIETNAM AND IT IS IN PROCESS OF FAVORING A BEGINNING OF PEACE IN THE MIDDLE EAST.

3. BOURGUIBA WAS ASKED TO COMMENT ON TUNISIAN-LIBYAN MERGER AGREEMENT IN LIGHT OF QADHAFI'S HOSTILITY TOWARD MAGHREB GROUPING AND LIBYA'S POOR RELATIONS WITH OTHER COUNTRIES IN MAGHREB. BOURGUIBA REPLIED HE HAD ALWAYS SAID, "THE MAGHREB IS NOT FOR TOMORROW." EVEN TUNISIAN-LIBYAN MERGER IS NOT FOR TOMORROW. IN SPITE OF THEIR AFFINITIES THERE ARE MANY THINGS THAT SEPARATE MAGHREB COUNTRIES. QADHAFI RECENTLY TRIED TO SHOW THAT UNIVERSITY STUDENT STRIKE WAS A MANIFESTATION OF PAN-ARAB NASSERISM, A PART OF THE REVOLUTION OF UNITY, WHEN IN FACT THIS HAD NOTHING TO DO WITH STRIKE. HE SAID GOT HAD QUESTIONED LIBYAN HIGH REP ABOUT THESE RADIO ATTACKS AND LATTER CLAIMED HE UNAWARE OF THEM. BOURGUIBA SAID THESE WERE NOT SERIOUS, THEY HAD NO IMPACT ON STUDENTS OR ON TUNISIA, " THEY ARE CHILDISH." CONCLUSION TO BE DRAWN IS SITUATION IS NOT RIPE FOR UNITY BUT THIS DOES NOT PREVENT ECONOMIC COOPERATION. BY BUILDING MANY THINGS TOGETHER IT MAY BE POSSIBLE TO OVERCOME EFFECTS OF DIATRIBE AND OF LIBYAN CULTURAL REVOLUTION.

4. BOURGUIBA ALSO COMMENTED ON UPCOMING ELECTIONS IN
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FRANCE PREDICTING GISCARD D'ESTAING WILL WIN BECAUSE FRENCH DO NOT WANT TO HAVE COMMUNIST MINISTERS. HE ALSO SAID NEW GOVERNMENT FORMED BY YITZAK RABIN IN ISRAEL MAY OFFER SOME CHANCE FOR PEACE SINCE IT WILL BE LESS INTRACTABLE. SEELYE

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